

desperately attempted to escape the terror and bleak future certain to return under the rule of the Taliban.

Through the chaos and the panic, the brave men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces, who once freed the Nation from the terrorist regime, stood as protectors at the Kabul airport for those who were desperately seeking a way out.

Then, on August 26, a terrorist attack at the airport claimed the lives of 13 of these brave servicemembers who were assisting with the evacuation, marking one of the deadliest days for U.S. forces during the 20-year conflict.

Marine Corporal Daegan William-Tyler Page was one of those killed in action on that day. Daegan was a young man from Red Oak, IA, who truly represents the greatness of our State, our country, and the U.S. Marine Corps in which he proudly served. Daegan may have been just 23 years old, but he died a hero who lived a life of service to his community and to his Nation.

Our hearts go out to those to whom he meant the most: his girlfriend, Jessica; his parents, Wendy and Craig Adelson and Greg and Jenni Page; his grandparents; and his four siblings, Corey, Garrett, Mason, and Emerson, to whom Daegan has always been a hero, even before he became a U.S. marine.

The wounds of war obviously aren't just borne by the warrior. It is the family of the fallen who will carry the scars for a lifetime. The hole left in their lives by the loss of Daegan can never, ever be filled. So let's also keep Daegan's family in our prayers.

Being from Red Oak, IA, I know Daegan's family. I have grown up with Daegan's family. It was my best friend in Red Oak that texted me after that explosion at the Kabul airport. She is the one who told me that Wendy Tye's son Daegan had been killed in this explosion.

So I gave the family time to come together, and that next morning I called Wendy's mother, Peggy. I love Peggy very much. I love their entire family very much, and I told her I was so sorry about the loss of Daegan. And she told me: JONI, just please let everybody know what an amazing young man that Daegan was.

And he was an extraordinary young man. Before we ended our conversation, she said: JONI, give that precious Libby of yours a hug for me, like I used to so many years ago when she was a little girl.

And she said: You never know when you will get that last hug from someone you love.

And, Peggy, I did. I gave my daughter Libby a hug.

So while Daegan was a tough marine—he really was—again, an amazing young man. He was fun, loving, and he had a giant heart and a soft spot for animals. He had three dogs—Shyla, Gracie, and Finn.

Growing up in Red Oak, and then in Omaha, Daegan's commitment to serv-

ice began at a young age as a longtime member of the Boy Scouts.

While he was just a child when the terrorists attacked America on September 11, 2001, after graduating from Millard South High School, he answered the call to serve his country by joining the U.S. Marine Corps.

Daegan's family says that he loved the brotherhood of the Marines and was proud to serve as a member of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, CA.

Daegan was always a dedicated team member. It didn't matter what it was, but he was dedicated, according to his former hockey teammates who, together, won the Nebraska State championship tournament. Omaha's hockey community has fittingly paid tribute to Daegan by placing hockey sticks on their porches in his memory.

A memorial service to celebrate Daegan's life is being held this Friday at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Omaha.

Like his family, teammates, and fellow servicemembers, we mourn the loss of Daegan, but also honor his heroism and his valor. He has been awarded the Purple Heart for making that ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

His life in Red Oak, IA, and Omaha, NE, and his death, remind us that this world is a very dangerous place with many wishing to do the United States harm. Our protection here at home depends upon the sacrifice and the service of many heroes, those like Daegan.

Let it not be forgotten that thousands of other lives were rescued from pending doom because of the bravery of Daegan and the 12 other servicemembers who lost their lives that day while standing guard to ensure the safe passage of others out of Afghanistan.

While it is heartbreaking that he was taken from this world too soon, Daegan will forever have the gratitude of our Nation.

So Wendy and Greg, and to your families, please accept my heartfelt condolences on the loss of your beautiful son, Daegan. The American people will never forget him, nor will they ever forget his life of service.

Semper Fidelis, Daegan, and god-speed.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

HONORING LANCE CORPORAL DAVID LEE ESPINOZA

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, in the final days of the U.S. military's presence in Afghanistan, our country suffered a devastating loss. Thirteen servicemembers were killed in a terrorist attack at the airport in Kabul, marking the deadliest day for the U.S. military in more than a decade in that country.

These young men and women, all between the ages of 20 and 31, were taken from loving families—parents, siblings,

spouses, fiancées—even a baby on the way.

In Laredo, TX, on Monday, I had the solemn honor of attending the funeral for one of these heroes and offering my condolences to his family.

U.S. Marine Corps LCpl David Lee Espinoza was only 20 years old when he lost his life last month, but he represented the very best of the Marine Corps, the U.S. military, and the very best of America.

From childhood, he dreamed of serving in the military. He joined the Marines right after high school to serve his country and to protect our freedom. And last month, he made the ultimate sacrifice in service to that mission.

The pride in this young marine and the gratitude for his service and sacrifice was visible throughout the Laredo community. Driving through Laredo from the airport, the streets were lined with folks, including schoolchildren holding up American flags in honor of LCpl Espinoza. Veterans from across the State proudly stood outside the entrance to St. Patrick Catholic Church to pay tribute to their fallen brother. And across the street, a giant American flag hung from the ladder of two fire trucks.

I attended the mass, officiated by Bishop James Tamayo, and paid my respects to David Espinoza's family and other members of his family.

There is nothing we can do to bring back LCpl Espinoza, but we can ensure that his service and sacrifice, and that of the other servicemembers killed that day, will never be forgotten.

I join those across the country who are mourning the loss of their heroes and honoring the sacrifices they have made for our freedoms. To me, one of the most unique things about the U.S. military—this is not just about our freedom. They were protecting the rights and the freedom and the dignity of people on the other side of the planet. Our Nation is forever grateful to these young men and women and their loved ones who made unfathomable sacrifices for our freedoms.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we are back in session after a busy August, and we are hitting the ground running in the U.S. Senate.

This week, congressional committees have heard from top Biden administration officials about the disastrous withdrawal of our troops from Afghanistan. In the months to come, there will be more questions about the decisions that led to the collapse of that country and how the administration plans to protect the American people from terrorist threats moving forward.

You know, the whole premise of our going to Afghanistan in the first place was to deny vacuums that could be filled by terrorist organizations like al-Qaida and ISIS and thus represent a threat to the homeland not only of people in Europe and in the region but also